



Ann Morgan &lt;morgana@graffton-ma.gov&gt;

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**Public Comment Form:**

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Town of Grafton MA &lt;vtstdmailer@vt-s.net&gt;

Thu, Jul 7, 2016 at 8:40 PM

To: planningdept@graffton-ma.gov

Submitted on Thursday, July 7, 2016 - 8:40pm

Submitted by anonymous user: 96.237.169.63

Submitted values are:

Choose a Project: Elmrock Estates (Fieldstone Farms) - Wheeler Road - North  
Grafton - 36 Single Family Houses - Potential 40B Project

First Name: Troy

Last Name: Gipps, V.P. Grafton Land Trust (GLT) for GLT Board of Directors

Email Address: [info@grafftonland.org](mailto:info@grafftonland.org)

Street Address: P.O. Box 114

City: Grafton

State: Massachusetts

Public Comment Disclaimer: I have read and understand the Public Comment  
Disclaimer.

Comments:

July 7, 2106

**RECEIVED****JUL - 8 2016****PLANNING BOARD  
GRAFTON, MA**

Dear Members of the Town of Grafton's Board of Selectmen,

We are writing relative to the application for Project Eligibility to MassHousing for the project known as Elmrock Estates, formerly Fieldstone Farms. Specifically, we are requesting that you strongly recommend to MassHousing the denial of project eligibility, for the reasons we set out below.

The Grafton Land Trust Inc. owns hundreds of acres of property in the Town of Grafton, and it is our mission to conserve these lands and make them available for outdoor recreation to the general public. Since 1958, we have assembled a large tract of open space in the Brigham Hill / Potter Hill area, thanks to the generous donations of land by local property owners and the expenditure of significant sums of money by our financial donors. Included in this land are our Gummere Wood and Marsters Preserve conservation areas, which abut the target parcels of the proposed development along a 2,300' border.

We believe that allowing the proposed development would seriously damage the public interests which our organization serves, without a corresponding public benefit. Specifically,

- The value of open space as wildlife habitat is significantly degraded by fragmentation – the interposition of built environment in the midst of open habitat. This can discourage some species of wildlife while putting stress on others, in favor of species which are more acclimated to nearby residential development.
- There is an extensive network of trails maintained by our volunteers, used daily by the general public for outdoor recreation in a beautiful natural environment. These trails exist on both sides of the proposed development, which would substantively impair the experience offered to the public by interjecting a built environment into the wooded area.
- We currently allow responsible, controlled hunting on this property. The introduction of this residential area in the midst of the otherwise uninterrupted open space above Lake Ripple would constrain our ability to

allow hunting on these properties, due to the 500-foot residential setback required under state law.

- Our current holdings together with privately-owned open space, some of which is permanently protected through conservation restrictions, constitute a significant watershed in the Lake Ripple basin. The proposed development would cut directly across this watershed, replacing open space with impervious surfaces.

Grafton has a Housing Production Plan and is making progress towards its fulfillment. The insignificant addition to the town's affordable housing stock is not worth the permanent impairment of the many values represented by the properties we so carefully protect for future generations.

Sincerely,

Board of Directors  
Grafton Land Trust, Inc.  
P.O. Box 114  
Grafton, MA 01519

The results of this submission may be viewed at:  
<http://www.grafton-ma.gov/node/86623/submission/893>